

REMARKS

Claims 13, 17, 19, 23, 26, 29, 31, 33, and 34 are pending. Claims 13, 26, and 33 are rejected under 35 USC 112. Claims 26, 29, and 31 are rejected under 35 USC 101. The drawings are objected to for lacking labels. Claims 13, 26, and 33 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Burgess (US 5,805,896), in view of Sakurai et al. (US 6,334,076), Kroeger (US 2002/0165723), and Elmqvist ("A Uniform Architecture for Distributed Automation", Advances in Instrumentation and Control, Instrument Society of America, Research Triangle Park, NC US, Vol. 46, Part 2, 1991, Pages 1599-1608). Claims 13, 17, 19, 23, 26, 29, 31, 33, and 34 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Burgess, in view of Sakurai, Elmqvist, and Leisten et al. (US 6,023,702).

Claim 29 is canceled herein, and claims 13, 19, 26, 33, and 34 are amended. Claim 35 is new, based on paragraphs 24-35 and FIG 3. No new matter has been added. Claims 13, 17, 19, 23, 26, 31, 33, 34, and 35 are presented for examination.

Applicants' paragraph numbers mentioned herein are relative to the substitute specification.

Response to 35 USC 101 rejection

Claim 26 is amended to recite controllers of a manufacturing and/or processing plant as suggested by Examiner, thus tying the claimed method to a machine.

Response to drawing objections

Replacement drawing sheets 1, 2, and 3 are provided with labels as required.

Response to 35 USC 112 rejections

The independent claims 13, 26, and 33 are clarified by positively reciting the elements of the claimed drawing to include a representation of the plant layout that shows components and ports. An attempt was made to avoid broadening or narrowing the claims with this clarification.

Response to 35 USC 103 rejections

The arguments below apply to all of the claims, including the independent claims 13, 26, and 33.

I. Predecessor/successor relationships: The independent claims 13, 26, and 33 recite the generation of plant automation code by graphically mapping input/output information to ports on components based on predecessor/successor relationships, contained in a description of the components. Burgess does not include predecessor/successor information in his component objects. Instead his directed relationships are defined at the graphical mapping stage by the programmer.

Examiner asserts on page 9, lines 10-11 of the Office Action of 11-26-2008 that directed relationships of components are defined in Burgess col. 3, lines 29-34, lines 54-57 (FIG 4), and col. 4, lines 1-16 (FIG 5). However, these lines describe visual programming as illustrated in FIG 4, in which a programmer graphically configures the directed relationships. Since predecessor/successor relationships are not contained in the descriptions of the objects 410, 420, 450, and 460, nothing prevents a reversal of the C-to-F and F-to-C calculator objects by the visual programmer, which would produce incorrect relationships.

Burgess col. 3, lines 21-38: "FIG. 4 is a diagram illustrating visual programming of the present invention. To generate a visual program to implement a temperature converter, a programmer would position a Fahrenheit scroll bar 401, a Fahrenheit display 430, a Centigrade scroll bar 420, and a Centigrade display 440. The programmer would also position an FtoC calculator 460, which converts a Fahrenheit value to a Centigrade value, and a CtoF calculator 450, which converts a Centigrade value to a Fahrenheit value. In one embodiment, the components are selected from an extendible list of available components. The programmer then connects the components through their ports. The connections 412->461 and 412->431 indicate that when the Fahrenheit scroll bar is changed (e.g., slider moved), the new value is sent to the FtoC calculator and the Fahrenheit display. The connection 462->421 indicates that when the FtoC calculator calculates a new Centigrade value, the new value is sent to the Centigrade scroll bar."

In contrast, Applicants' predecessor/successor relationships are already contained in a description of each component, thus, they are predetermined, constraining the connections to a proper order by allowing fewer degrees of freedom in order to reduce the possibility of error.

Applicants' paragraph 10, lines 1-3: "In the system according to the invention data continuity is achieved in that control-relevant information is already contained in a description."

Applicants' paragraph 20, lines 13-18: "The information already contained in the description 1 is used to allocate input and output information to the ports. The predecessor-successor relationships between the components are governed by this information, i.e. who sends data to whom via which data input is defined thereby."

This prevents incorrect relationships that are possible in Burgess, because the predecessor-successor relationships are defined prior to graphical mapping stage for local plant code generation.

Applicants' paragraph 21: "On the basis of the metainformation, the components 2 are connected to one another by automated means. Particular connections between the components 2 can only be implemented if this is permitted by the constraints described in the metainformation. Automated "wiring" of the components 2, and therefore automatic generation of automation code, are therefore effected."

Applicants' predetermined predecessor/successor relationships restrict freedom in order to reduce complexity in automation programming, because incorrect options are eliminated from consideration. Continuity of expert information and earlier know-how guides and limits the plant automation code developer.

Applicants' paragraph 22, all lines: "The work of the development engineer is greatly facilitated thereby, since fewer degrees of freedom exist as a result of the definition of the metainformation, reducing the possibilities of error. In addition, a continuous information flow is ensured, reducing the loss of already established know-how during the development of the automation system."

Applicants' paragraph 34, lines 2-3: automation code is generated on the basis of existing descriptions 1 of a plant structure.

II. Previously input plant structure and know-how: On page 9, line 11 of the office action of 11-26-2008, Examiner concedes that Burgess does not teach that (1) code generation

for manufacturing or processing plants and automation code is generated on the basis of a structure of the plant and know-how including predecessor/successor relationships previously input into the description. Know-how previously input into the description is recited in all of the independent claims. It includes predecessor/successor relationships, as taught in paragraphs 22-25 of the specification. This is not simply an intended use as Examiner asserts, but is a feature that prevents sequence errors in any use.

Sakurai provides standard program modules previously coded by program engineers. These standard modules are independent of plant type (col. 4, lines 3-6). A plant operator inputs a plant operation procedure by keyboard, which includes a time sequential control flow (col. 3, lines 61-63). This results in a selection of standard program source code modules for assembly into a load module for execution in a programmable logic controller (PLC). There is no teaching that the standard program modules include a previously entered description of predecessor/successor relationship for plant components.

Examiner cites Sakurai's sequential flow chart (SFC) and block diagram as evidence of automatic code generation using a drawing of a plant layout with automatic predecessor/successor control as claimed by Applicants. However, the operator of Sakurai must explicitly select appropriate program modules using a module identification code, must then input specifications of a plant operation procedure to modify each program module, and must specify their execution order and interconnections. This is massively more complex than Applicants' code generation as claimed. It requires an operator with a systems level understanding of program modules, load modules, symbolic address resolution, linking, and loading.

Sakurai col. 5, lines 30-41: "The plant operation procedure is inputted to the CRT controller 20 preferably in the form of the sequential flow chart (hereinafter called SFC) 52 and arithmetic block diagram 50, by using the keyboard 5. In the CRT controller 20, while observing CRT 21, an operator inputs an identification code of a module through the keyboard 5 to thereby read the module from the stacker 156 via the system 10C. While observing the read-out plant operation procedure information, the operator enters from the keyboard the program generating information necessary for the generation of a program, i.e., program module execution level and order, signal interconnection or the like."

Sakurai col. 6, lines 49-54: "(3) The interconnection relationship between customized modules are represented not by absolute addresses of a memory storing the modules but by the device numbers defined by various list information. After customized modules are combined and edited as a load module, address translation is carried out."

III. Description in drawing: Examiner concedes on page 9, line 15 that (2) Burgess does not teach components described in a drawing comprising control-relevant information in a manufacturing and/or processing plant. On page 10 of the office action Examiner cites Sakurai col. 2, lines 20-51. However, these lines do not mention a drawing or graphics at all. Examiner also cites Sakurai col. 4, lines 8-22. However, these lines describe visually monitoring of a PLC program while it is executing, in order to verify proper program operation -- not graphically configuring a specification for automatic code generation.

IV. Description based on material flow: Examiner concedes on page 9, line 16 that (3) Burgess does not teach control information described in a drawing based on a material flow in a manufacturing and/or processing plant. Examiner then asserts on page 11, line 4 that Elmqvist supplies the claimed feature of drawings with control-relevant information based on material flow in a processing plant, because it is inherent that the physical objects of the plant form the path for the material or fluid flow as shown in the example of the tank system (figures 1-5). However, as in Burgess, this tank system layout only exists after the visual designer has selected the graphic components and placed them in this order. These graphical components do not have predecessor/successor descriptions stored in them to require an order based on a material flow and prevent mistakes. Instead, the design module definitions of Elmqvist are purely hierarchical (FIG 2). The first line under VISUALIZATION on page 1605 states: "The complete picture, as seen in a window, is a hierarchical picture according to the module hierarchy." The two tanks of FIG 1 are just instantiations of the same "tank" object. Thus their order in FIG 1 could be reversed -- the same kind of mistake as discussed for Burger above. It so happens that this reversal would not make a difference in FIG 1 of Elmqvist, but this is only because FIG 1 is too simple an example to illustrate an ordered relationship. The examples of Elmqvist and Burgess are both highly simplified, but at least the example of Burgess can be used to show how order is important, which is the case in a manufacturing or processing plant.

V. Predecessor/successor relationships in view of Kroger: Examiner concedes on page 9, line 13 that Burgess does not teach system components defined to have predecessor/successor relationships. Examiner then cites par. 112 of Kroeger. This paragraph describes a display of project management task records. However, these tasks may be edited/added at any time, thus changing their sequence (par. 113).

Kroeger par. 113: As set forth hereinabove, tasks may be edited/added at any time by authorized contacts. Further, the project task manager may provide an audit trail of all task changes made, when they were made, and by whom. The project task manager may also display bar graphs and calendars of schedule tasks & relationships over a scrolling time period. As such, the project task manager may display real time projections of budgets and actual costs.

VI. Kroeger is incompatible: Kroeger teaches a project and document management system -- not a system for generating plant automation code or any kind of automation code. Examiner has not identified any elements in Kroeger that could correspond to manufacturing plant components. Kroeger simply coordinates tasks done by humans, which does not apply to the present invention. Kroger does not provide a graphical configuration process. FIGs 7 and 8 show a textual menu-driven screen. Kroeger provides full flexibility for changes in the schedule and contracts (the term "change order" is found 11 times in Kroeger). Flexibility is a primary purpose of Kroeger in order to overcome prior art inflexibility (par. 5, lines 1-5, and par. 6, lines 5-9). As such, this feature is not simply an alternate embodiment, and it is incompatible with the present invention, which reduces flexibility to avoid mistakes in plant automation code. This teaches away from the present invention, in which the predecessor/successor relationships are pre-established.

VII. Examiner cites Leisten as teaching predecessor and successor activities in a plant. However, Leisten teaches a method of project management of workgroups. His method has nothing to do with generating automation code for a manufacturing and/or processing plant, automatically or otherwise. His method has nothing to do with defining input/output signal connections between components for generation of automation cod. He uses house building as

an example of a managed project. His predecessor and successor activities simply refer to a calendar schedule of a human work project. Leisten simply coordinates tasks done by humans, which does not apply to the present invention.

Leisten col. 15, lines 34-49: "The term "Work Process" is used in the following for the full integration of process and project management under the inventive concept. The example is taken from the context of a building enterprise in the building industry, where the building general contractor erects houses according to the requests of an owner."

Leisten col. 15, lines 50-53: "For the process of building the standard house, a project schema 102 is defined which manages the application of resources, as building teams and building equipment within well defined schedule and calendar constraints."

This does not fill the deficiency of Burgess, noted by Examiner on page 17 lines 15-19, that Burgess doesn't specifically teach code generation for a manufacturing and/or processing plant, and that automation code is generated on the bases of a structure of the plant and know how, including predecessor/successor relationship previously input into the description.

VIII. M.P.E.P. 2143.03 provides that to establish prima facie obviousness of a claimed invention, all words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art. If an independent claim is nonobvious under 35 U.S.C. 103, then any claim depending therefrom is nonobvious.

MPEP 2106 II C:

". . . Finally, when evaluating the scope of a claim, every limitation in the claim must be considered. USPTO personnel may not dissect a claimed invention into discrete elements and then evaluate the elements in isolation. Instead, the claim as a whole must be considered. See, e.g., *Diamond v. Diehr*, 450 U.S. 175, 188-89, 209 USPQ 1, 9 (1981) ("In determining the eligibility of respondents' claimed process for patent protection under § 101, their claims must be considered as a whole. It is inappropriate to dissect the claims into old and new elements and then to ignore the presence of the old elements in the analysis. This is particularly true in a process claim because a new combination of steps in a process may be patentable even though all the constituents of the combination were well known and in common use before the combination was made.").

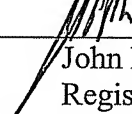
Conclusion

As argued above, the proposed combination of Burger, Sakurai, Kroeger, Elmqvist, and Leisten does not teach or suggest several features of the present invention recited in the independent claims. These features provide major benefits in safety and continuity of plant automation design and code generation over the prior art. Furthermore, Kroeger is in a different field, and teaches away from the present invention, as argued above. Leisten is also in a different field and does not teach any element of the invention. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the 35 USC 103 rejections, and allowance of the present application.

The commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any appropriate fees due in connection with this paper, including the fees specified in 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 (c), 1.17(a)(1) and 1.20(d), or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 19-2179.

Respectfully submitted,

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By:   
John P. Musone  
Registration No. 44,961  
(407) 736-6449

Siemens Corporation  
Intellectual Property Department  
170 Wood Avenue South  
Iselin, New Jersey 08830